

**'Its a fine line between . . . self discipline, devotion and dedication: negotiating authority in the teaching and learning of Ashtanga yoga**

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**“It’s a fine line between ... self-discipline, devotion and dedication”:  
negotiating authority in the teaching and learning of Ashtanga yoga.**

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**"It's a fine line between ... self-discipline, devotion and dedication": negotiating authority in the teaching and learning of Ashtanga yoga**

**Abstract:**

This paper looks at the production and shaping of the self via Ashtanga yoga, a bodily practice, growing in significance in Western cultures, which can involve a radical form of (re)shaping the self. In particular, it looks at the interaction of external and internal sources of authority, including the yoga student's own expertise of themselves (experiential authority), the authority of the practice and the authority of the teacher. This allows the paper to rethink standard models of authority in educational and 'spiritualities of life' literatures, which have generally imagined a top-down singular form of authority, essentially stamped onto the subjects being educated. The paper outlines what might enter into a more 'distributed' form of authority; being not simply the educator figure (their positionality, status, institutional location, contextualisation within prior fields of knowledge/belief), but also how their exertion of authority meshes (and sometimes conflicts with) the 'experiential authority' of the subjects being educated, articulating with their own 'self-authority' (what they know, expect and command from themselves, on the basis of countless prior experiences, encounters, interactions, times and spaces). The paper draws upon qualitative fieldwork carried out in Brighton, UK.

## **1. Introduction**

It is difficult to conceive of teaching and learning in the absence of relations of authority, and standard visualisations of education – notably in school, college or university situations – revolve around the exertion of the educator’s authority over the educated (the teacher over the taught). As a contribution to this special issue on alternative geographies of education, the following paper explores a different framing of how educators (broadly conceived) may acquire, wield and make effective the authority that is seemingly central to how they teach. As such, it should be regarded as an exercise in thinking *geographies of authority*, potentially of relevance to both the emerging geographies of education subfield and wider inquiries into geographies of power, introducing authority itself as warranting attention for how it is created, enacted and, if necessary, enforced across a range of worldly spaces (bodies, rooms, halls, corners, corridors, cafés). The specific aim will be to avoid standard models of top-down singular authority, essentially as ‘stamped’ on to subjects being taught, and instead to envision what might be called a more ‘distributed authority’. Authority in this guise becomes more relational and multiple, not simply about the figure of the educator – his/her positionality, status, institutional location, framing within prior fields of knowledge/belief and embodied occupation of space (for instance, at the front of a classroom, on a raised platform) – but also how the educator’s exertion of authority meshes with the ‘experiential authority’<sup>i</sup> of subjects being educated. The paper thereby takes seriously the formation of subjects’ own ‘self-authority’<sup>ii</sup>, asking about what they come to know, expect and command from themselves on the basis of numerous prior experiences, encounters, interactions, times and spaces.

The existing body of literature considering authority and education, to be introduced shortly, has largely focussed on school settings. This paper, however, looks at an alternative and perhaps less obvious manifestation of education: namely, yoga as a form of education, wherein experts seek to instruct their pupils not only in the postures of yoga, but also in the underlying philosophies, and wider ‘ways of living’ embodied by yoga. Our focus is specifically Ashtanga yoga, a form of ‘modern postural yoga’ (MPY)<sup>iii</sup> that hinges on physical, embodied practices, a relatively recent aspect of the practice of yoga<sup>iv</sup>. The relationship between yoga and authority has been addressed within the literature on ‘spiritualities of life’<sup>v vi</sup>, but, as we will argue, this literature is also rooted in an oversimplified idea of authority. Rather, our emphasis will lie in exploring different ways of conceiving authority in education, empirically focusing on the operation, negotiation and contestation of ‘distributed authority’ between the educators (here Ashtanga teachers) and the educated (Ashtanga students) in Mysore-style Ashtanga classes.

In the paper we proceed by considering how authority has been conceptualised in educational literatures (section 2), literatures about spiritualities of life (section 3) and in relation to the formation of the self (section 4). A presence in some of this literature is what we term ‘middle’ period Foucault

and his analytics of disciplinary power. Following a brief introduction to our empirical research (section 5), we examine authority in Ashtanga yoga, offering interpretations of how the Ashtanga teacher exerts authority (section 6a), how the Ashtanga student develops his or her own authority of/over themselves (section 6b) and how these two (often contradictory) sources of authority are negotiated within the space of the Ashtanga yoga class (section 6c). Concluding comments follow, linking to ideas of the ‘very late’ Foucault from his final two lecture courses on ‘the government of self and others’,<sup>vii</sup> as we stage final remarks about alternative geographies of authority, education and teachers.

## **2. Authority in education**

The education literature has covered the issue of authority, usually in school settings,<sup>viii</sup> and yet it still remains ‘a fundamental, problematic and poorly understood component of classroom life’<sup>ix</sup>. Loosely echoing Weber’s distinctions between ‘traditional’ and ‘legal’ forms of authority, the former sanctioned by ‘time and tradition’ and the latter bureaucratically installed<sup>x</sup>, two basic understandings arise of how teachers develop or maintain their position of authority. First, they are seen to be *in authority*, a form of (*de facto*) authority wherein they can work practically on pupils’ conduct as a form of social control; and, secondly, they are seen to be *an authority*, a theoretical (*de jure*) authority wherein they are regarded as superior in the areas of knowledge and belief<sup>xi</sup>. Analytic schemas duly reflect the relative subject positions of teachers in authority and pupils without authority, tending to underline, albeit not necessarily with a critical voice, the fundamentally unequal power relations running between teacher and taught<sup>xii</sup>. More nuanced observations characterise a teacher’s authority as encompassing: *competent authority* (their skills and knowledge); *legitimate authority* (their position in a social hierarchy); *coercive authority* (the belief that a teacher will carry out a threat of force if students fail to comply); *authority by inducement* (the teacher offers rewards)<sup>xiii</sup>; and *personal authority* (the qualities of the teacher [e.g. charisma] and the pupil’s desire to please the teacher)<sup>xiv</sup>. Such observations do begin to flesh out the workings of authority, hinting at the importance of context and also the role of students, but the drift is still to cast authority as inhering *in* the person of the teacher rather than being a relational achievement<sup>xv</sup>, meaning that the experiences of those who are subject, or make themselves subject, to authoritative power relations in an educational setting are neglected<sup>xvi</sup>.

The subfield of geographical research on education has not said much about questions of authority, at least not along the lines pursued in this paper. The earliest contributions concentrated on the spatial contours of overall educational/school systems, with particular interest in catchmenting, the demographics of school rolls and the effects of areal deprivation on school performance indicators<sup>xvii</sup>. More recently, with an effective *rebirth* of the subfield – cast as ‘new geographies of education and learning’<sup>xviii</sup> – a range of new issues have surfaced, entraining subject-matters such as the spatial

restructuring of education under neoliberalism, the transnationalism of students, the place of education in students' career development, and the connections between education, socio-cultural difference and agendas of cosmopolitanism, citizenship and social inclusion<sup>xix</sup>. The view has been largely from the school gates *looking outwards*, rather than looking closely into the dynamics of how schools, classrooms and institutional-educational spaces actually 'work' in practice. This is not entirely the case, and some studies have addressed 'subjectivities in diverse learning spaces'<sup>xx</sup>, tackling the ethico-politics of curricula, the spatial-identity politics of students or the emotional-affective atmospherics of inhabiting a range of educational spaces both in schools and beyond.<sup>xxi</sup> Collins and Coleman hence characterise 'social geographies of education' which either look 'beyond' or 'within school boundaries', noting a few studies confronting the 'social control function' of schools and, in so doing, tracking how 'school spaces, and the classroom in particular, are organised in ways intended to facilitate adult *authority* and surveillance'.<sup>xxii</sup>

Collins and Coleman suggest a Foucauldian inflection in such studies, citing in particular Foucault's mid-1970s text *Discipline and Punish*, and they effectively underscore how Foucault's attention to 'the art of distributions' – or 'the distribution of individuals in space' – should be fundamental to any sustained account of 'authority and surveillance'.<sup>xxiii</sup> While Foucault's *oeuvre* has remained as yet but lightly quarried by geographers of education – and, indeed, by scholars identifying with the neighbouring sub-field of 'children's geographies'<sup>xxiv</sup> – there can be little doubt that what Foucault identifies as 'the meticulousness of the regulations, the fussiness of the inspections, the supervision of the smallest fragments of life and the body' (integral to the innovations of an emerging modern European disciplinary regime) do indeed pervade 'the context of the school'<sup>xxv</sup>. The geographer most explicitly joining these dots is Gallagher<sup>xxvi</sup>, who acknowledges that 'Foucault's work on power resonates with [his] experiences of research in educational institutions'<sup>xxvii</sup> and provides detailed descriptions of the micro-spaces of power constitutive of primary schools. While Gallagher stresses spatialised forms of teacher surveillance, visual and aural, his Foucault-inspired picturing of power also takes seriously the *reversals* of power, the potential for power to enable resistance as well as domination, which thereby 'complicates the view of adults as powerful and children as powerless'.<sup>xxviii</sup> As such, Gallagher arrives at a sense of 'distributed power' not wholly different from our ideas about 'distributed authority', although his approach arguably sidesteps questions about authority – how it arises, is maintained and rendered efficacious, in conventional or alternative forms – as well as also drawing inspiration from the 'middle' rather than the 'later' Foucault<sup>xxix</sup>. Gallagher remains a crucial background for us in what follows, however, even as we make a gradual switch through our paper to engaging more directly with the 'later' and then 'very late' Foucault.

### **3. Authority and spiritualities of life**

From the perspective of the sociology of religion, yoga has been understood as an alternative spiritual

practice<sup>xxx</sup>. Heelas has coined the term ‘spiritualities of life’ to conceptualise such practices, arguing that a distinction can be made between ‘life-as religion’ and ‘spiritualities of life’ on the basis of where the authority to decide how best to live is located<sup>xxxi</sup>. In the former, authority is held and transmitted to subjects by the earth-bound interpreters of the religion (a priest or holy person), a model echoing the standard versions of educational authority outlined previously<sup>xxxii</sup>. In the latter, authority emanates from the practising subject, with ‘the inner realm of life serving as *the* source of significance and authority’<sup>xxxiii</sup>, wherein the key to ‘right conduct’ lies in participants’ relation to their selves, mediated and shaped by their memories and sensations, the internal conversations in which they engage and the judgements that they make<sup>xxxiv</sup>. Immediately, then, authority here appears more scrambled than in the conventional top-down reading, although the risk is of simply reversing the polarity to the point where the taught seemingly no longer need a teacher. Indeed, Heelas conceptually separates a free subject from external authority, suggesting that participants need to experience ‘enough freedom from the conformist authority of established orders to listen to their ‘inner voice’ or ‘true self’, to live their own lives; ‘to exercise *self-responsibility*’<sup>xxxv</sup>, such that the freedom of an individual to transform his or her own ‘*unique life*’<sup>xxxvi</sup> is incompatible with external forms of authority. This move is problematic because it leaves little room to develop insight into the kinds of ‘external’ authority that undoubtedly play a part in the practice of ‘spiritualities of life’ (teachers, gurus, instructional videos or regulatory bodies)<sup>xxxvii</sup>.

The only caveat that Heelas makes to his general thesis of ‘self-authority’ is the suggestion that ‘the language of the milieu – ... ‘support’, ‘opportunity’, ‘possibility’, ‘try this and see for yourself’ – ... masks what is really taking place: teachers and teachings are exercising their hold. Sharing and caring are vehicles for the exercise of power’<sup>xxxviii</sup>. If this is the case, then more research should be undertaken on the exercise of such relationships of power and authority in contexts such as yoga teaching. Heelas’s understanding seems to register power *only* as a vehicle of control and domination, whereas, in line with Gallagher’s Foucauldian school geographies, we suggest a more productive account of power wherein power is co-produced and not something that simply restricts freedom. This power relationship, and hence the work of authority, can thus be explored through its ‘microphysics’: ‘its techniques, procedures, levels of applications, targets’; its relational operations variously traced via such imaginaries as ‘capillaries’ ‘transmissions’ and ‘relays’ of power through specific spatial fields’<sup>xxxix</sup>. Borrowing from ‘middle’ and ‘later’ period Foucault, moreover, authority might additionally be understood as a way of conducting or stylising others – through knowledges, techniques and strategies – but only insofar as those on the receiving end are (or suppose themselves to be) free to conduct themselves, and in effect to produce themselves, as subjects of authority<sup>xl</sup>. Such is the visioning of authority that we stir into Heelas’s take on ‘spiritualities of life’, and inspect empirically in the case study that follows.

#### 4. Authority, self and other

Foucault's 'later' work<sup>xli</sup> addresses the question of how the individual 'is led to constitute him or herself as subject'<sup>xlii</sup>. The somewhat unstated importance of the *self-disciplining* self which sits at the heart of 'panopticism' – as the individual under the constant threat of surveillance internalises the external 'eye of power'<sup>xliii</sup> – now becomes restated, differently cast from what, on one reading, can still seem a top-down, conventionally authoritarian account of power in *Discipline and Punish*<sup>xliv</sup>. Instead, attention alights precisely upon the inner movements of power, as individuals self-discipline themselves, not just in fear of reprisals from 'above' but as a more fundamental process of self-constitution wherein questions of knowledge and care (alongside responsibility) become equally if not more salient. Now empirically channelled through inquiries into Ancient and Christian practices of self-improvement, Foucault focuses upon the 'experiments' that individuals conduct upon themselves to gain species of self-knowledge – which may be taken as plausible alternatives to the external rigours of Classical/Enlightenment 'science' or philosophy – holding the potential to radiate out into relations with others proximate or distant<sup>xlv</sup>. Discipline and knowledge, self and others, and related relations, such as those of authority and care running between teacher and taught, are duly thrown into delicate new alignments and perspectives.

More concretely, Foucault describes how the care of the self might be constructed through particular techniques that give 'form' to 'our' existence and enable the establishment of a 'well-ordered relationship to the world and to others'<sup>xlvi</sup>. This care of the self cannot be practised in isolation because, if it is, the relation to the self potentially becomes debased (via 'egoism, narcissism, hedonism'<sup>xlvii</sup>). A relationship with another is hence necessary such that we might 'appeal to someone to help us form our opinion of ourselves'<sup>xlviii</sup>. In contrast to Heelas, for whom subjects must attain freedom from all such external authorities so as to live a life true to themselves, here the individual subjects him/herself to the educator's authority so as to be true to him/herself; that is, in order to be 'free'<sup>xlix</sup>. Whereas Heelas frames the possibility of freedom as an absolute condition, a Foucauldian approach sees complex entanglements of power in which freedom is always related in some way to domination<sup>1</sup>, such that 'liberty is itself ultimately a discursive effect, a product of a particular power/knowledge nexus, rather than some social state<sup>li</sup>. The paradox lies in the individual's understanding that they are achieving freedom, whereas they are arguably reinserting themselves into a different form of power/knowledge nexus. Foucault further queries what relation to the self is constructed with respect to exercising 'external authority', because the 'care of the self, the fashioning of one's self, and the relation to others, what can be broadly termed the 'government of others', are firmly linked'<sup>lii</sup>. What is at stake is 'the *establishment of relations of authority over the self and over others* such that, if we are an expert, the way in which we are an authority over ourselves informs the way we can be an authority over others'<sup>liii</sup>. Those who subject themselves to such relations of authority do so precisely because



they can see the success of the project of care of the self in the teacher/expert<sup>liv</sup>. Foucault thus offers what might, with hesitations, be described as a model for understanding the relationship between external and internal authority in the constitution of a relation of care of the self, one which thereby complicates accounts of authority in the diverse spaces of both education and 'spiritualities of life'.

The 'very late' Foucault's lectures only interrogate a specific time-space context,<sup>lv</sup> albeit certain more general propositions can arise, as just proposed, particularly if run alongside recent writings in so-called 'new authority studies'<sup>lvi</sup> which emphasise the 'non-foundational, singular and ephemeral' nature of authority<sup>lvii</sup>. Writings by Dawney and Noorani<sup>lviii</sup>, starting to unpack dimensions of 'experiential authority', are particularly pertinent (not least for our own empirics). Dawney seeks to understand how the extreme (traumatic) experiences of one individual may become authoritative for others. Their testimonies are lent weight by the 'intensity' of particular experiences, and the affective response of others to such testimonies makes them 'experts by experience'<sup>lix</sup>, which usefully elaborates role of the listener in creating such 'experiential authority'. Noorani's account is more inward-looking, locating authority in the individual's own experience as he discusses how we might engage with the self so that we indeed do become experts in our own (singular) experiences:

... it is in the nature of experience that it teaches truths not accessible through other forms of knowledge, such as protocols or textbooks. Indeed, past experiences come to offer promises of experiences to come. In these ways, experiential knowledge acquires its own authority<sup>lx</sup>.

The individual always hold the potential to be the authority on themselves, for their singular internal experience is only (fully) accessible to them. For the purposes here, this means that there may be conflicts between the authority of the individual's singular experience and the more general kind of authority of a teacher. While the educator will be the authority in the specific field that they are teaching, they will not be able to be the expert of the self that those being educated will likely (be able to) claim.

These re-conceptualisations of authority foreshadow a nuanced understanding of how authority operates in Ashtanga yoga, one accenting how 'experiential authority' acquired by the self (as the 'expertise of the self' *about* the self) can rest in (and be contradictory to) more widely dispersed forms of authority. These external sources of authority are never straightforward reproductions of moral systems or external rules, but are always reconstructed via the teacher's own experiences. Authority in the spaces of Ashtanga is always a composite: different sources of authority are folded together in a particular aggregation. This composition of authority demands empirical engagement with how the kind of *voluntary* submission to external authorities found in many educational spaces manifests in the *singular experience* of an individual. To effect such an empirical engagement, the paper now contextualises the case study and its research methods, before tracing the negotiation of authority through the teacher-pupil relationship across three areas of investigation: first, how teachers become

‘obeyable’; secondly, the authoritative relation cultivated to the self; and thirdly, the interaction between different forms of authority, how these conflict with each other and how these conflicts are negotiated.

## **5. The case study**

Ashtanga yoga was established by Sri K. Pattabhi Jois in Mysore, India<sup>lxi</sup>. It is said to originate from the *Yoga Korunta*, a text given to Jois by his guru, Sri T. Krishnamacharya. The transnational spread of Ashtanga began in the 1970s with Western practitioners, travelling to Mysore and studying at Pattabhi Jois’s Ashtanga Yoga Research Institute, returning to their home countries to teach the practice. Before his death in 2009, Jois (and other members of his family) travelled annually to the UK, US and other parts of the world, while his wider family continues both to teach outside India and to run the school in Mysore. A ‘serious engagement with yoga’<sup>lxii</sup> is particularly predominant in Ashtanga yoga *vis-à-vis* other forms of MPY, and Ashtanga can be distinguished from other forms of MPY by the centrality of control and asceticism. Mysore-style classes are also distinctive: unlike in other forms of MPY, where teachers demonstrates the poses to pupils who then copy the pose in unison, here pupils work through a set sequence of poses at their own pace. The teacher overlooks them and intervenes when deeming it appropriate.

The paper draws on a year-long research project into two practices broadly configured as ‘spiritualities of life’, yoga and mindfulness meditation, carried out in Brighton and Hove (a smallish coastal city in the South of England known to possess a high concentration of such practices). A qualitative approach involved in-depth interviews with teachers and centre owners, diary-interviews conducted with participants in yoga and mindfulness meditation, and observant participation during yoga classes and a mindfulness meditation course<sup>lxiii</sup>. This paper specifically focuses on the data from the two participants who practised Ashtanga yoga and also from several Ashtanga teachers (the overall dataset was substantially larger). While a limited ‘sample’ here, the volume of data was detailed: five day-long space-time diaries and in-depth interviews. The diarists became ‘proxy ethnographic researchers’ on our behalf, becoming ‘*observant of their own* (embodied) participation ‘in the field’ of new spiritualities’<sup>lxiv</sup>. Diarists were asked to provide some details about their background (their history of engagement with spiritual practices and other personal circumstances) and the diary format required that they recorded their activities, noting their time-location and reflecting on their yoga practices (how they fitted within their day, how they experienced it). These diaries shaped the subsequent interviews, which consisted of follow-up questions about the individual’s practices and their insertion in the ‘warp and weft of how they inhabited the city and its constituent places (neighbourhoods, parks, seafronts, shops, cafés, health centres, yoga studios, meditation centres, and so on)’<sup>lxv</sup>. While the paper here cannot claim to be an ‘authoritative’ analysis of Ashtanga yoga, it

prompts questions that might be valuably asked of both other forms/spaces of education and 'spiritualities of life'.

## **6. The practice of authority in Ashtanga yoga**

### **a) Experiential authority**

The diarists' supposed that the authority of the practice – a sense of their own practice as a source of 'experiential authority' – was demonstrated and achieved on a daily basis, ingrained in the feel of their own bodies and minds during the practice, in the afterglow and then in the familiar repetition and habit of daily practice. Diarist 1<sup>lxvi</sup> articulated a strong sense of such interior authority during her interview, saying:

"... once I tried it I realised that it was actually a really, really good thing and it was something I really, really enjoyed and I just made the time and money for it"<sup>lxvii</sup>.

"I feel really healthy, I feel really strong, I feel like my immune system is much better than it used to be ... my digestion system used to be quite bad and that's it's been so much better since I started practising. I sleep better, my hair and nails grow quicker ... and on a spiritual level ... it's kind of like a ritual and ... it feels like a devotional practice as well, so there's definitely a spiritual element in there as well and it's quite meditative and I feel like ... I'm getting to know myself better through having this practice".

At the same time, her experiences of missing the practice reinforced this value of her daily Ashtanga practice:

"I can really tell the difference on the days I don't practise, i.e. more tired, sluggish, less energy, and it makes me thankful and more appreciative that I do have a regular practice to sustain me and give me that energy boost in the morning. So it's a good reminder" (diarist 1, diary).

Being reliant on self-practice, the realm of inner experience was crucial in cultivating the authority of the self for the participants. The students became attuned to the practice and learned to judge themselves in relation to it, as diarist 1 suggested in her diary: "I feel like I'm practising with an injury at the moment, which is a good lesson as it's forcing me to be gentle and go steady". Thus, the participants are likely to develop exactly the kind of expertise in engaging with their own experience as outlined by Noorani.

Even though the predominant source of authority during Mysore classes was the self – "yoga's like more direct internal, an hour and a half, on your own, on your mat" (diarist 3<sup>lxviii</sup>, interview) – the teacher being physically in the room was also seen to provide a helpful regulatory presence – "the teacher keeps you there when you want to run" (diarist 3, interview). This comment suggests that experiential authority, constituted internally within the self, was always related to external forms of authority, troubling Heelas's suggestion that the inner realm is the sole source of authority in

‘spiritualities of life’.

### **b) External authorities**

While Heelas plays down external sources of authority, Ashtanga yoga has a tradition of strong external authority. The students participating in this research perhaps have an even more pronounced relationship to external authority than do other Ashtanga students because they practised every day with a teacher. One of the interview questions asked participants what they looked for in a teacher, and in response diarist 3 discussed the teacher’s embodiment of expertise:

“... someone who’s walked the road and they’re further down the road than you and that then inspires you to keep walking down the same road because they must ... have some attractive quality that you ... admire or respect or both”.

He also saw his teacher embodying positive qualities, such as stillness and quietness, bestowed by serious practice of Ashtanga yoga:

“Despite the kind of intensity of the practice, [the teacher] seemed very quiet and still ... there was a similarity I think between him and [my first teacher] and I think I’m clearly attracted ... to that ... you think, ‘this guy seems really peaceful’. And yet, with Ashtanga, there’s like a fierceness to the practice and an energy to it, and yet there’s a softness as well and ... I was really struck by the sort of seeming paradox of ... really hard work, and yet ... there is this stillness underneath” (diarist 3, interview).

The structure of Ashtanga yoga formalises expertise, being based around a particular *gurusisya* (‘teacher-discipline’) relationship<sup>lxix</sup>. In order to become an authorised Ashtanga teacher, the teacher must have learned from the founder of Ashtanga yoga, the late Pattahbi Jois, or one of his family or another authorised teacher – the authority of the practice being transmitted via this lineage. Diarist 1 knew the significance of this lineage, considering the “late Shri K Pattahbi Jois to be [her] guru”, thereby underscoring a form of distant or removed expertise that lasted even beyond death. This guru status is made possible by the ‘systematisation, transmission, and ordered application of knowledge’<sup>lxx</sup> in the name of Ashtanga. One of the teachers who worked in a natural health centre drew on this lineage, saying that “the Ashtanga yoga that we do is very pure to the roots from Mysore in India”, thus distinguishing it from “a gym style of Ashtanga which is very different” (teacher 2, interview).

The lineage was also respected by diarist 1, who described when her usual teacher was replaced by a teacher who had:

“... lived in Mysore ... for about ten years ...[so] ... knew the Jois family, knew *Guruji* [Jois, the guru/spiritual leader] and he was taught directly by him. And he was very kind of ... , ‘this is what *Guruji* says so this is how you must do it’ ... I respect him for following that path ... without question because that gave him a certain sense ... authority ... And actually I think I really respected that teacher because, even though a lot of people would disagree with what

they were saying and were like, you know, ‘what if I don’t want to do it your way?’, it was kind of like, well then, ... ‘go to another teacher’” (diarist 1, interview).

This remark points to diverse relations held by students to the Ashtanga lineage, also raising the potential for conflicts with strict adherence to the Ashtanga way of working. Diarist 1 noted that:

“He was just kind of helicoptered in ... and he had a sense of authority before he even arrived because he’s an authorised teacher ... He came in and it was just like turned everything upside down. It was just like this kind of like whirlwind and a lot of people reacted very strongly to it”.

While Heelas suggests that external forms of authority might be limiting, restricting the freedom of participants in ‘spiritualities of life’, the interviewees saw the external authority of the teachers as predominantly beneficial, setting an example anchored in the intensity of their own prior experiences and resultant learning.

Moreover, the Mysore spatial layout of the class, whereby the teacher moves round, observing the students as they practice from all angles, allows the teacher to develop an in-depth knowledge of the student and their embodiment of Ashtanga. The teacher enacts authoritative relations with the students in two main ways. First, they offer verbal instructions and make physical adjustments to the poses that the student is doing. During adjustments, the teacher uses hand-on-body contact to move different parts of the student’s body into the ‘correct’ pose, giving the student a feel for the pose and “giv[ing] people ... a chance to feel that they can perhaps do it one day on their own” (teacher 1, interview). Secondly, the teacher regulates the student’s progress through the sequence of poses, arbitrating when they are ready to move onto the next pose. According to Heelas’s framework, this intervention might be experienced as a deadening of the participant’s freedom, but diarist 1 offered a counter interpretation, suggesting that it facilitated her practice:

“I think it’s good to have that every now ... to be pushed ... and especially with something like Ashtanga, where you are progressing through a series, and it’s ... like you could just stay where you are for years and, unless someone is actually pushing you and helping you progress, it would be easy to just kind of get a bit stale and a bit stuck and so, yeah, and so I think that is important”.

Both student and teacher correspond in believing the importance of the student submitting to this version of external authority, so they might access the kinds of truths that they see to be held in the practice of Ashtanga. The teacher is seen to have a better knowledge than the students themselves of what they might be able to achieve, and the teacher’s external view enables the student to access possibilities in their practice not previously contemplated. Diarist 3 noted that the teacher “can see things in your body and your practice that you can’t see because you’re too close to it”, suggesting that the authority of one’s own experience might sometimes be experienced as limiting, with the expert gaze of the teacher being vital in overriding this self-limiting experiential authority. This point echoes Foucault’s<sup>lxxi</sup> assertion that we require an educative relationship with the other, so that we can

overcome the potential solipsism of our relation to ourselves.

The institution and practice of Ashtanga yoga itself was also seen by the interviewees to embody expertise. The practice, as laid out by *Guruji*, was trusted to be complete, offering everything needed by the students:

“the consistent practice and the structure of the practice means that you don’t hide in the things that you’re good at and you can’t avoid the things that you’re not good at” (diarist 3, interview).

The structure was reckoned to assist students in becoming better yogis as they could gain balance and not submit to their own whims about what they liked and did not like to do<sup>lxxii</sup>:

“... one of the major things that attracted me to Ashtanga was that it was a daily practice which gave me a structure ... that I could surrender to ... we do the same poses every day, the postures are the same, the time that you practice is the same” (diarist 3, interview).

The repetitive, regularised structure of Ashtanga was also found to be comforting, offering a familiar continuity as bodies and minds became attuned to the rhythms of the practice. Even so, the interviews and diaries show that there was not *always* this kind of easy correspondence between external authorities and students’ own experiential authority, as we now turn to discuss.

### **c) Relating external and internal authority**

One instance from diarist 3’s interview and diary is especially instructive for questions about how individuals negotiate conflicting forms of authority, specifically how they might draw together various and multiple sources of influence and authority in ways potentially changing shape over time and space. He describes in detail his struggle to ‘drop-back’ – essentially moving from a standing posture to a wheel posture in which the feet and hands are on the floor, with the chest and front of the legs facing outwards and upwards, forming an inverted U-shape (*Urdhva Dhanurasana*). In his diary, he described how he was:

“Really struggling with the back-drops against the wall... I feel so frustrated. Partly because I feel that I should be able to do this and also [my teacher] telling me that I should be able to do it and I’m not doing it!”.

This entry suggested a consensus with the teacher’s belief, based on close observation of the diarist-student, that he *should* be able to drop-back. The diarist trusted in the external view of himself that the teacher offered, but this trust was partly constructed via his own experiential authority and the assessment of his own capacities to which it gave rise. He addressed this matter further in a later diary entry:

“I’ve been really focussed on dropping back for quite a while now, and all of the teachers I’ve worked with recently have said that I should be able to do it. The obstacle is my mind! When I

try and do it, my fear just stops me and I panic ... I've had teachers telling me I should be able to do this for 7 months now, so it's a cause of some frustration within myself that I've not tried it on my own. The fear just seems like insurmountable".

The conflict located here is not between the teacher and taught, but rather within the participant himself, who diagnosed a conflict between the potential ability of his body and his emotional response to this potential. Even his self-authority and will to drop-back was seemingly insufficient to overcome the 'experiential authority' of this 'insurmountable' fear, which he took as the barrier to him dropping back. It is hence not always possible to exert self-authority straightforwardly: simply to will something and for it then to happen. He added:

"I realised for the first time today that no-one can help me with this. I actually have to physically tip myself backwards and land on my hands. It doesn't feel very 'yogic' to physically force myself to do something ... But today was an important milestone in my thinking. This is something I choose to do and only I can actually make it happen. So somehow I have to find a way through the fear".

His authority was nested within the teacher's authority; he accepted the teacher's assessment that he should be able to do the drop-backs, and he recognised the need to exert authority over himself, forcing himself to drop-back in order to achieve the pose. Such achievement is another step towards the 'enlightenment' offered by Ashtanga yoga, but the external authority of the teacher just telling him to drop-back was not enough. The diarist referenced the tensions present in negotiating these different sources (and times and spaces) of authority, noting that 'it's a fine line between ... self discipline, devotion and dedication and kind of just being really tough on yourself' (diarist 3, interview).

This diarist also hinted at wider conflicts between different forms of self-authority, suggesting that the most important thing is to exert the will over oneself in order to do the daily practice, rather than exerting the will over oneself in order to progress through the sequence of poses:

"... it's the process, the discipline, it's the daily discipline of self-practice that is more important than achieving any one pose ... I know that intellectually, but emotionally the two don't add up. So emotionally I'm all like bent out of shape because, 'Oh my God', my teacher says I can do it; my teacher's teacher says I can do it; the guy from the other side of the world says I can do it. You know, everyone says I can do it and yet I'm failing to do the thing that all of these people say that I should be able to do" (diarist 3, interview).

What is still overriding for this participant are the teacher's expectations and his own overriding sense that he should be able to drop-back, which prevail over both his feeling of fear (or his experiential authority) and also his understanding of the wider ethos of yoga. In a passage quoted earlier, the diarist had reflected that this kind of self-mastery and forcing himself does not feel very 'yogic', thus crystallising a further conflict between (his understanding of) the wider yogic ethos of 'non-striving' and the more localised authority of the teacher meeting the authority of his own experience. This material demonstrates an intricate, complex negotiation between different forms of authority which all Ashtanga participants have to face, if rarely quite so reflexively or knowingly. By the time that the

interview was conducted with this diarist, he had managed to drop-back and again he emphasised the significance of the teacher's authority:

"I didn't believe I could drop-back and I needed people to tell me that I could do this. If they hadn't told me I probably never would have done it" (diarist 3, interview).

Here he confirmed the truth of the teacher's authority, but also the wider structures of Ashtanga yoga within which that authority is located. He addressed the significance of his own experiential authority, as well as his own body's agency in resisting the kinds of self-discipline that he usually wants to exert. The application here of the self on the self is a potentially problematic process, as the self is not necessarily malleable and compliant, and the possibility of *failing* to become an expert of the self, and the consequences of this failure, are interesting future questions to ask.

## **7. Conclusions**

'Regardless of the expense, let's seek out new teachers.'<sup>lxxiii</sup>

Towards the close of his very last lecture course, Foucault urged the value of teachers, not necessarily because of special authority lodged in the figure of any one individual teacher, but because of the external authority residing in the *logos* which the (good) teacher will teach. It is a Socratic move, passing beyond 'a teacher of *tekne* who can pass on his teaching to students'<sup>lxxiv</sup> – as in the educator who goes through the motions of transmitting 'technical', repeated, rote knowledge – towards the model of a teacher who communicates the *logos* ('the missing teacher') as arguably deeper truths about the care of the self. Such a teacher 'will have to take care of himself [*sic*] by listening to the language of mastery (*maîtrise*) that comes from the *logos* itself'<sup>lxxv</sup>. In short, both teacher and taught are here positioned in relation to the external authority of a broader accumulated, guiding wisdom, and as such we vacate the more conventional (top-down) picturing of authority's educational geographies (as in section 2 above). Yet, we perhaps shift even further from Heelas's self-absorbed account of authority, with its individualistic (bottom-up) picturing of authority's new-spiritual geographies (as in section 3 above). The key relation – of how educators educate, or how maybe they ought best to educate – becomes more firmly about a negotiated stance with respect to an overall 'armature for life'<sup>lxxvi</sup>, externally anchored and derived. 'Foucault was insistent on showing that this care [this learning] was not a solitary exercise', writes Gros<sup>lxxvii</sup>, but a social practice and even an invitation to good government (correctly caring for the self in order to care correctly for others)'.<sup>lxxviii</sup>

A productive reading of authority enables us to counter Heelas's assertion that the influence of external authorities is (always) limiting, and the accounts offered by our interviewees emphasise the multiple and shifting relations that they possess to the external authorities significant in their Ashtanga practice. For our participants, taking part in Ashtanga is not about becoming free from external sources of authority, such as teachers, but is rather about a complex interplay between



different (sometimes competing) forms of authority which students have to negotiate and (try to) reconcile during their practice. Further studies of Ashtanga yoga, other forms of MPY and wider practices that are understood as 'spiritualities of life' are required, in order to trace more of the ways in which we (the educated) become 'enlisted into our own self-fashioning'<sup>lxxxix</sup> and the forms of human subjectivity then emergent.

We have also sought to intimate alternative geographies of authority as they might arise in educational settings, including ones of yogic 'training'. Indeed, we have conjured some new themes for geographical inquiry (and for related fields) by pinpointing authority as worthy of scrutiny in its own right, not merely as a dimension of power, and in the process asking critical questions about how authority is enacted, recognised, believed and obeyed – or not – in educational and closely related settings. Concretely, we have offered a case study of negotiating authority in the teaching and learning of Ashtanga yoga which underlines one more space<sup>lxxx</sup> – the Mysore-style yoga studio – which can be seen as implicated in 'the persuading of people (or, rather, in people persuading themselves) to take seriously 'the relationship that one ought to have with one's status, one's functions, one's activities, and one's obligations'<sup>lxxxi</sup>. Ashtanga yoga relies on an arguably stronger sense of external authority than has traditionally been understood to exist in 'spiritualities of life', although this external authority does not, by any means, replace the authority of the subjective experiences of the participant. Instead, there is a complex interplay between the teacher and student, who together negotiate the authority of what comprises the 'right' conduct on an ongoing basis. As such, the examples illuminate the range of different authority relations that exist between teachers and pupils in 'spiritualities of life', even troubling the definition that Heelas gives of the very category of 'spiritualities of life', based as it is on the location of authority within and *not* outside of the self.

At the same time, the case study reminds geographers of education that a complexity and range of different (power) relations exist in schools and other educational settings. The space of the yoga class, which lies far outside of more conventional educational spaces such as schools, alerts geographers of education to the push of recognising and attending to the multiple (and multiplying) 'alternative' spaces in which education happens<sup>lxxxii</sup>. Attending to different educational spaces might underline commonalities and differences regarding what enters into 'distributed authority', as well as illuminating how those being educated are developing (or resisting) the kinds of self-authority often demanded in current educational contexts<sup>lxxxiii</sup>. Moreover, if obliquely, we are echoing the later Foucault in considering how work on alternative geographies of authority – in various spheres of operation – might conceive of how '[a] different relationship must be established [between teacher and taught], a relationship of care, assistance and help'<sup>lxxxiv</sup>; one where '[t]he same founding act of taking possession of self by self [self-authority] gives me enjoyment of myself, ... and enables me to be useful to others in their trouble and misfortune'<sup>lxxxv</sup>.

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<sup>i</sup> L. Dawney, 'The figure of authority: the affective biopolitics of the mother and the dying man', *Journal of Political Power* (2013) 29-47; T. Noorani, 'Service user involvement, authority and the 'expert-by-experience' in mental health', *Journal of Political Power* (2013) 49-68.

<sup>ii</sup> M. Foucault, *The Government of the Self and Others: Collège de France Lectures, 1982-1983* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan 2010); M. Foucault, *The Courage of Truth (The Government of the Self and Others II): The Government of the Self and Others: Collège de France Lectures 1983-1984* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan 2011); T. Osborne, *Aspects of Enlightenment: Social Theory and the Ethics of Truth* (London, Rowman and Littlefield 2008).

<sup>iii</sup> E. De Michelis, *A History of Modern Yoga: Patanjali and Western Esotericism* (London, Continuum Books 2005), p2.

<sup>iv</sup> J. Alter, *Yoga in Modern India: The Body between Science and Philosophy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press 2004).

<sup>v</sup> P. Heelas, *Spiritualities of Life: New Age Romanticism and Consumptive Capitalism* (Oxford, Blackwell 2008).

<sup>vi</sup> These are practices such as yoga, meditation, T'ai Chi, massage and Reiki, which have previously been termed 'New Age' practices or 'Inner life spiritualities'.

<sup>vii</sup> We acknowledge that a sub-text of this paper concerns the 'periodisation' of Foucault's *oeuvre*, so that descriptors like 'middle', 'later' and 'very late' do feature in what follows. Given space constraints, we have to assume that readers have some handle on these different periods in Foucault's life and work, but in essence: 'middle' = Foucault circa writing *Discipline and Punish* (see endnote xxiii), mid-1970s; 'later' = Foucault starting to write about 'the care of the self' and 'technologies of the self', late-1970s-early-1980s; 'very late' = Foucault of the last two Collège de France lecture courses, 1982-1984 (see endnote ii). For guidance on these shifts, see C. Philo 'Michel Foucault', in P. Hubbard and R. Kitchen (eds.) *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (London, Sage) 162-170; C. Philo, 'A 'new Foucault' with lively implications – or 'the crawfish advances sideways'', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (2012) 496-514.

<sup>viii</sup> Unsurprisingly, the education literature tends to anchor its thinking about authority in the space of the school (and, more specifically, the classroom). The structure of schools as established and legitimate educational establishments provides a location for top-down authoritative power relations, and their very existence is made possible because of a societal consensus (almost globally) around the value of education and the school-teacher's position of 'knowing better'. A few educational studies of authority *outside* of conventional schools can be found: S. Delamont 'The smell of sweat and rum: teacher authority in capoeira classes', *Ethnography and Education* (2006) 161-175; N.C. Deutsch and J.N. Jones 'Show me an ounce of respect': respect and authority in adult-youth relationships in after-school programs', *Journal of Adolescent Research* (2008) 667-688. Authority in such studies still tends to be portrayed as teacher-centric.

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<sup>ix</sup> J. Pace and A. Hemmings 'Understanding authority in classrooms: a review of theory, ideology and research', *Review of Educational Research* (2007) 4-27; also J. Pace and A.B. Hemmings, *Classroom Authority: Theory, Research and Practice* (London, L. Erlbaum Associates, 2006).

<sup>x</sup> S.L. VanderStaay, B.A. Faxon, J.E. Meischen, K.T. Kolesnikov and A.D. Ruppel 'Close to the heart: teacher authority in a classroom community', *College Composition and Communication* (2009), p.263.

<sup>xi</sup> Wilson (1995) in J. Steutel and B. Spieker 'Authority in educational relationships', *Journal of Moral Education* (2000) 323-337.

<sup>xii</sup> Wrong (1976, 2002) in G. McLeod, J. MacAllister and A. Pirrie 'Towards a broader understanding of authority in student-teacher relationships', *Oxford Review of Education* (2012), 493-508; also C. Buzzelli and B. Johnson 'Authority, power and morality in classroom discourse', *Teaching and Teacher Education* (2001) 873-889.

<sup>xiii</sup> McLeod, 'Authority', note that coercive authority and authority by inducement are similar to other forms of power relation (force and manipulation) and thus operate according to a different logic (and, as such, perhaps should not be included in discussions of authority as a specific form of power).

<sup>xiv</sup> McLeod, 'Authority'. In other places, the fivefold characterisation of educational authority (or power) listed here is rendered in slightly different but clearly equivalent terminology as: *expert authority; positional authority; corrective authority; rewarding authority; and personal authority* (eg. J.C. McCrosky and V.P. Richmond 'Power in the classroom I: teacher and student perceptions', *Communication Education* (1983) 175-184). The source is then traced back to J. French and B. Raven, 'The bases of social power', in D. Cartwright (ed.) *Studies of Social Power* (Ann Arbor MI, Institute for Social Research) 150-167.

<sup>xv</sup> Teachers and students are most often treated as separate in analyses: **e.g. Harjunen, teachers?**

<sup>xvi</sup> It must nonetheless be acknowledged that there are contributions to the education literature which are highly critical of authority wielded in the top-down manner of dominating power, and which instead argue about how to install alternative, more participatory and empowering forms of educational encounter. In some guises, these contributions end up discounting notions of 'authority' altogether – as inherently reactionary – or effectively relocate it from the teacher to the taught. In a few places, an account closer to our own notion of 'distributed authority' results, with the authority possibilities of both teacher and taught brought to the table (as in VanderStaay, 'Close').

<sup>xvii</sup> Eg. L. Bondi and H. Matthews (eds.) *Education and Society: Studies in the Politics, Sociology and Geography of Education* (London, Routledge 1988).

<sup>xviii</sup> S.L. Holloway and H. Jöns 'Geographies of education and learning', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (2012), p.485.

<sup>xix</sup> See, e.g., the various contributions assembled in the 2012 Transactions Virtual Issue on 'Geographies of education and learning' (S.L. Holloway and H. Jöns (eds.)), available at [www.rgs.org/TIBGVirtual](http://www.rgs.org/TIBGVirtual); also S. Holloway, P. Hubbard, H. Jöns and H. Pimlott-Wilson 'Geographies of education and the significance of children, youth and families', *Progress in Human Geography* (2010) 583-600; and see chapters in R. Brooks, A. Fuller and J. Walters (eds.) *Changing Spaces of Education: New Perspectives on the Nature of Learning* (London, Routledge 2012).

<sup>xx</sup> Holloway, 'Geographies', pp.483-484; also cast as 'spatialities of learning *itself*' in P. Kraftl 'Towards geographies of 'alternative' education: a case study of UK home schooling families', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (2013) p.447.

<sup>xxi</sup> A smattering of examples, loosely mapping on to the three sub-foci noted here, are: J. Pykett 'Pedagogical power: lessons from school spaces', *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* (2009) 103-117; J. Pykett 'Making citizens in the classroom: an urban geography of citizenship education', *Urban*

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Studies (2009) 803–823; T. Delph-Janiurek, 'Sounding gender(ed): vocal performances in English university teaching spaces', *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* (1999) 137–153; P. Hopkins 'Towards critical geographies of the university campus: understanding the contested experience of Muslim students', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (2011) 157–169; P. Kraftl 'Building the idea: the material construction of an ideal childhood', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (2006) 488–504; P. Kraftl, *Geographies of Alternative Education: Diverse Learning Spaces for Children and Young People* (Bristol, Policy Press).

xxii D. Collins and T. Coleman 'Social geographies of education: looking within, and beyond, school boundaries', *Geography Compass* (2008) 281–299, esp. p.284 (our emphasis). The studies cited here include: S. Catling 'Children's personal geographies in the English primary school geography curriculum', *Children's Geographies* (2005) 325–344; S. Fielding, 'Walk on the left! children's geographies and the primary school', in S. Holloway and G. Valentine (eds.) *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living and Learning* (London, Routledge 2000) 230–244.

xxiii M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books 1977), esp. p.141.

xxiv C. Philo, 'Foucault's children', in Holt. L. (ed.) *International Perspectives on Geographies of Children, Youth and Families: Exploring Young People in their Socio-Spatial Contexts* (London, Routledge, London 2010) 27–54.

xxv Foucault, *Discipline*, p.140. Educational research has drawn upon Foucault, and in many studies, with a softer or louder Foucauldian echo, the school becomes equated with 'the prison house of power': eg. VanderStaay, 'Close' pp.262–263.

xxvi M. Gallagher 'Power is not an evil: rethinking power in participatory methods', *Children's Geographies* (2008) 137–150; M. Gallagher 'Researching the geography of power in a primary school', in K. Tisdall, J. Davies and M. Gallagher (eds.) *Researching with Children and Young People* (London, Sage 2009) 57–64; M. Gallagher 'Are schools panoptic?' *Surveillance and Society* (2010) 262–272; M. Gallagher 'Sound, space and power in a primary school', *Social and Cultural Geography* (2011) 47–61; also L. Gallacher and M. Gallagher 'Methodological immaturity in childhood research? thinking through participatory methods', *Childhood* (2008) 499–516.

xxvii Gallagher, 'Sound', p.50.

xxviii Gallagher, 'Power', p.139. In part, Gallagher uses this Foucauldian perspective to illuminate the ambivalent power dynamics of participatory research *and* simple notions of how teachers/researchers might 'empower' students.

xxix This is not completely the case, and Gallagher does reference some of Foucault's writing on 'technologies of the self', as well as some of the published Collège de France lectures: even so, it is principally the Foucault of disciplinary power fame who is his academic guide though the papers cited earlier.

xxx We acknowledge that our brush here with sociologies of religion, and indeed with literature on 'new spiritualities', is limited to only brief comments on where the latter touches on questions of power and authority. A more sustained engagement, clarifying our own 'geographical' slant on these literatures is provided in C. Philo, J. Lea and L. Cadman, 'The new urban spiritual? tentative framings for a debate and a project' (The New Urban Spiritual [project] Working Paper #1, available from the authors). There is a small amount of other work on geographies of yoga, notably A.-C. Hoyez, 'The 'world of yoga': The production and reproduction of therapeutic landscapes', *Social Science & Medicine* (2007) 112–124.

xxxi See also P. Heelas, and L. Woodhead, with B. Steel, B. Szerszynski and K. Tusting, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell 2005).

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xxxii We would argue that this is a problematic understanding of authority and religion, but further discussion lies outside of the scope of this paper.

xxxiii Heelas, *Spiritualities*, p. 28 (original emphasis).

xxxiv *Op. cit.*, p.33.

xxxv *Op. cit.*, p.38 (original emphasis).

xxxvi *Op. cit.*, p.28 (original emphasis).

xxxvii Of course, these external forms of authority are taken up in a variety of ways, to differing degrees, across different practices considered as 'spiritualities of life'.

xxxviii P. Heelas, 'The infirmity debate of the viability of the new age' *Journal of Contemporary Religion* (2006) pp.236-237.

xxxix C. Philo, 'Foucault', p.167, drawing upon Foucault, *Discipline*, p.215, and also synthesising passages from geographers such as Driver and Hannah.

xl M. Foucault 'The subject and power' *Critical Enquiry* (1982) 777-795.

xli Especially Foucault, *Government*.

xliv *Op cit.*, p.5.

xlvi M. Foucault 'The eye of power', in C. Gordon (ed.) *Michel Foucault: Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* by Michel Foucault (Brighton, Harvester Press 1980).

xlvii Foucault, *Discipline*. Even if the 'top' here is a much more dispersed 'top' than a singular sovereign with despotic authority, how those on the receiving end of panopticism, crouching before the 'eye of power', actually internalised these capillary extensions of power – becoming 'docile subjects' inwardly as well as outwardly, in thought as well as word and deed – does remain a somewhat open question for 'middle' Foucault.

xlviii J.P. Sharp, P. Routledge, C. Philo and R. Paddison, 'Entanglements of power: geographies of domination/resistance', in J.P. Sharp, P. Routledge, C. Philo and R. Paddison (eds.) *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance* (London, Routledge, 2000) esp. pp.16-19.

xlix F. Gros 'Course Context', in Foucault, *Government*, pp.377-378.

l *Op cit*, p.378.

li Foucault, *Government*, p.44.

lii Osborne, *Enlightenment* p.81.

lii Sharp, 'Entanglements'.

lii Philo, 'Foucault', p.168.

lii A. Milchman and A. Rosenberg 'Review essay: Michel Foucault, *The Government of the Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982-1983*', *Foucault Studies* (2010) p.158.

liii Osborne, *Enlightenment*, p.89, added emphasis.

liv *Op cit*. p. 88.

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<sup>lv</sup> Or, rather, various time-space contexts; and we acknowledge that there are tensions within Foucault's own *oeuvre* between claims made about, say, modern European disciplinary power and excavations of Greek, Roman and Early Christian forms of pastoral power. Moreover, there are moments when a more general portrayal of the self and its relations of care (to itself and to others) *does* emerge; and we admit that, to an extent, we do follow this generalising lead.

<sup>lvi</sup> A group of researchers who aim to revitalise studies of authority, power and empowerment: see C. Blencowe, J. Brigstocke and L. Dawney 'Authority and Experience', *Journal of Political Power* (2013), 1-7; also [www.authorityresearch.net/](http://www.authorityresearch.net/). In particular, they question the perceived assumption that authority is no longer relevant, and propose that authority as a form of (productive) power needs to be interrogated. In small measure, our paper is an engagement with these 'new authority studies'.

<sup>lvii</sup> Blencowe, 'Authority', p.6.

<sup>lviii</sup> Dawney, 'Figure'; and Noorani, 'Service'.

<sup>lix</sup> Dawney, 'Figure', p.42

<sup>lx</sup> Noorani, 'Service', p.56.

<sup>lxi</sup> B. Smith "With heat even iron will bend': discipline and authority in Ashtanga Yoga', in M. Singleton and J. Byrne (eds.) *Yoga in the Modern World: Contemporary Perspectives* (London, Routledge 2008).

<sup>lxii</sup> Related to its 'physically demanding' nature, the 'programmatic form' of the sequence, and the 'strong pedagogic emphasis on daily practice' (Smith, 'Heat', p.142).

<sup>lxiii</sup> L. Cadman, C. Philo and J. Lea 'Using time-space diaries and interviews to research spiritualities in an 'everyday' context', in L. Woodhead (ed.) *How to Research Religion: Putting Methods into Practice* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, in press). This chapter offers full details that space limitations preclude us elaborating here, including a careful account of our particular 'diary' method (and its inspirations) and its pros/cons, as well as reflections on the characteristics of our participants.

<sup>lxiv</sup> Op cit.

<sup>lxv</sup> Op cit.

<sup>lxvi</sup> Female, 26-35, living with partner, an administrator.

<sup>lxvii</sup> Interview quotes have had repetition and hesitation removed for ease of reading; they are also given double-quote marks.

<sup>lxviii</sup> Male, 26-35, living with partner, works in new media.

<sup>lxix</sup> Smith, Heat, p.140).

<sup>lxx</sup> De Michelis, History.

<sup>lxxi</sup> Foucault, Government.

<sup>lxxii</sup> Both of these are examples of how ceding to external authority enables the submission of the self to a wider system of judgement about how to live life, removing the responsibility for this from the individual subject (Blencowe, 'Authority', p.15).

<sup>lxxiii</sup> Foucault, Courage, p.151.

<sup>lxxiv</sup> Op cit. p.152.

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<sup>lxxv</sup> Op cit. p.152.

<sup>lxxvi</sup> Op cit. p.204.

<sup>lxxvii</sup> F. Gros, 'Course content', in Foucault, *Courage*, p.354.

<sup>lxxviii</sup> Op cit, p.354. We acknowledge that we are riding over significantly different components of Foucault's arguments in these final two lecture courses, crossing over from Socrates to the Cynics, blurring different models of scholastic or practice-based learning, and not really attending to a crucial distinction between *techne*-based education and *parrhesiac* (or dialogical, critical) education. Nonetheless, for our purposes of recasting geographies of authority (in connection with education/learning), such differences can perhaps be suspended.

<sup>lxxix</sup> Philo, 'Foucault', p.165.

<sup>lxxx</sup> In addition, for instance, to the confessional or the Roman city-state (Sharp, 'Entanglements', pp.33-35.

<sup>lxxxi</sup> M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol.3: The Care of the Self* (Harmondsworth, London), p.84; also Philo, 'Foucault', p.168.

<sup>lxxxii</sup> Eg. Kraftl, 'Alternative'.

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Eg. D. Watson, C. Emery and P. Bayliss, with M. Boushel and K. McInnes, *Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing in Schools: A Critical Perspective* (Bristol, Policy Press, 2012).

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Foucault, *Courage*, p.272

<sup>lxxxv</sup> Op cit. p.273.